

"Lincoln's Living Memorial," by Dr. John Wesley Hill

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. B. CARROLL REECE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 1925

Mr. REECE. Mr. Speaker, at the birthday celebration of Abraham Lincoln, held under the auspices of the trustees of Lincoln Memorial University, at the Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., February 12, 1925, which was attended by members of the President's Cabinet, Senators, Congressmen, and prominent business men, Dr. John Wesley Hill, chancellor of the university, delivered an address on Lincoln Memorial University—a Living Memorial to the great Emancipator.

Lincoln himself came from the people among whom this memorial stands. Under leave granted me I wish to have Doctor Hill's address inserted in the RECORD that the people of America may know that in the midst of the many numbers of marble and bronze, reared to the memory of Lincoln one has been founded in the soul of the people from whom he came and which is to-day perpetuating the principles for which he stood. It is my good fortune to represent the district in which this great institution is located, and I have been able to observe the splendid work which it is doing.

The address is as follows:

LINCOLN'S LIVING MEMORIAL

Lincoln Memorial University is the crystallized dream of Abraham Lincoln. It stands at Cumberland Gap, where the States of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia intersect. It is Lincoln's living memorial, the educational hope of a vast population of upstanding, ambitious American mountaineers.

In the great prosperous and progressive North, educational institutions and agencies are multiplied into a veritable prodigality of opportunity, but in the isolation and solitude of the Appalachian fastnesses, where rail splitting and mule riding, candlelight, homespun, and log cabins survive the march of modern civilization, only a crude cabin school here and there dots the landscape, and the people sit in a gloom upon which the light of knowledge has but dimly dawned.

They are a wonderful people—shy, timid, taciturn, hospitable, and adventurous, full of intensity and high daring; the very stuff of which heroes are made.

We read the stories of John Fox and others, replete with the romance of the mountains, feudal battles, illicit distilling, the eccentricities, struggles, and heroisms of a grim, gaunt, mysterious folk; but beneath the romance and tragedy of it all there flows the purest American blood under our flag.

We have discovered the economic possibilities of the Appalachian region, harnessed its mountain torrents, uncovered its mineral wealth,

felled its forests, and surveyed and appraised every acre of its soil. But in our development of its natural resources we have not taken stock of the 6,000,000 undiluted Americans in that country; we have not catalogued their spiritual, intellectual, and civic values. We have neglected a man power sufficient in its original endowment and possibilities to build and direct the destiny of an empire.

We have expended millions upon the Americanization of the foreign born, the uplift of the Sicilian, the Turk, the Greek, the Portuguese, the Pole, the Russian, the refugees from the despotisms of the Old World, and in our zeal for them we have forgotten the children of our own sky and soil.

We have substituted the melting pot for the log cabin. We have been so occupied with the millions pouring in upon us from the back yards of Europe that we have forgotten those of our own household—children of poverty; not the poverty of the Old World made despicable by centuries of submission to despotism, but the poverty of the new—in which the germ of manhood grows unrestrained by the demands of luxury and untainted by the poison of prodigality, the poverty through which Boone, Houston, Andrew Jackson, Farragut, Henry Clay, and Abraham Lincoln made their way. Back there, far back in the mountain fastnesses, there is a vast army of American youth dowered with the same possibilities.

John Hays Hammond, the great American engineer, has caught the vision of this possibility, and he is planning in the early spring to make a survey of that entire region with a view to putting Lincoln Memorial on such an industrial basis as shall afford self-support to the students and enlarged usefulness to the university.

Providence has held these mountaineers in reserve. They have functioned magnificently in every national crisis; at Kings Mountain during the Revolution; throughout the war of 1812 and the Civil War, when their loyalty alone held the "border States" under the flag of the Union; in the Spanish-American War and in the World War, in which they furnished the greatest hero of the allied armies—Sergeant York.

We need them right now to reinforce our patriotism, uphold our American ideals, and protect them from the marauding hosts bearing down upon us from the Old World. There is no time for delay. This army of 6,000,000 courageous mountaineers must be trained into efficient citizenship.

I once saw a cartoon representing a disheveled, begrimed tramp standing at the front door of a magnificent mansion in a great city, politely asking the lady of the house for the privilege of stepping into the hall and "throwing a fit." These Bolshevistic epileptics are pleading with Uncle Sam for the same privilege; and while, to our national humiliation and peril, we have in our midst a cowardly, simpering class of citizens who are ready to open our national gateway for the incoming of these "undesirables," thank God, in the country I am representing here, the descendants of the Jamestown Settlement, with the blood of Washington, Patrick Henry, "Light Horse Harry" Lee in their veins, are insisting that America shall never become the seedling ground for the noxious growth of Bolshevism and anarchy. They are ready, if necessary, to shed their blood without stint and to lay down their lives without complaint in order to preserve constitutional government.

Lincoln is their ideal, and they are following in his footsteps. His principles dominate the curriculum of Lincoln Memorial University. Every problem among its students is challenged with the question,

"What would Lincoln say about it if he were here?" And somehow there is a feeling among these people that Lincoln is there, that his spirit broods over the mountains, and that his voice may still be heard pleading for the deathless principles for which he lived and died—"government of the people, for the people, by the people," the preservation of constitutional authority, the integrity of the judiciary, the maintenance of law and order, the protection of human rights; life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness; the application of the golden rule in the settlement of industrial disputes, a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations, and the solution of every problem "with malice toward none and charity toward all," with "firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right."

There is nothing obsolete in these articles of faith; they are instinct with life; applicable to conditions to-day and adapted to all time; not iridescent baubles of political vacuity, but a body of faith which is the very corner stone of our national life.

And we are making an applied science of Lincoln's principles in this university bearing his name. There is no garbling of his words, no mutilation of his thoughts, no misapplication of his principles. It is little wonder, therefore, that the slogan of our university is "Lincolnize the mountains." That means the amelioration of social barbarities, the shattering of ignorance and superstition, religious intolerance, and bigotry, the breaking down of the mountain walls of provincialism, the softening of feudal asperities, the uprooting of deep-seated retaliations and hatreds, the dawn of a better day.

Such a work is fundamental and creative; it strikes to the roots of things, deals with essentials and results in mental and spiritual illumination and transformation. Among such a people, ethical tinkering, psychological cobbling, and socialistic whitewashing will accomplish nothing. Only the spirit of Lincoln, his love of the truth, his sympathy for humanity, his devotion to liberty, his faith in God, will bring about the renewal and uplift of these people who have detoured for 150 years and are now seeking the Lincoln highway of straight-forward, progressive Americanism.

Such a people are worth educating; they are worth it not only because of their capacity, but of their ambition; yes, and because they are willing to pay for it in the sweat and blood of honest toil. They want a "chance," not charity. The World War shook the scales from their eyes and they are climbing toward higher levels, aspiring to outlook from the heights.

We have a thousand students, 80 per cent of whom are working their way toward the goal. They not only go through the university, but the university goes through them. Over 400 applicants are on the waiting list. Their cry for "a chance" is resounding through the mountains. Lincoln Memorial University must grant the appeal! We dare turn none away. In turning a poor boy away to-day we may lose a Lincoln to-morrow. We have a great historic background, a great natural environment—probably the most beautiful college campus in America—a loyal faculty and a president to the manner born, Dr. Robert O. Matthews, who, with his cultured wife, is making the supreme sacrifice—a man with rare organizing genius and unusual ability as speaker and teacher, loved and honored throughout the Appalachian region. Our embarrassment is in our wealth of opportunity. Our limitations are in our lack of equipment, scholarship fund, and buildings. We need a large dining room, a number of cottages for our professors, an auditorium to take the place of the one that was burned to the ground last fall, and greater endowment. Ours is the romance of

American education. Our student body is permeated with the spirit of sacrifice. They are willing to pay for an education in work, to earn while they learn. One hundred dollars coupled with the self-help provided by the university will carry a student for a year. The story of the struggles of these ambitious young people is full of pathos and tragedy.

Some time ago a young man walked over a hundred miles to our doors and applied for admission. The dean was obliged to say, "Our dormitories are full and every bed is occupied. We have no place for you to sleep." To which this proud upreaching mountain lad replied, "I didn't come here for to sleep, but to git an edication." It is sufficient to say that he remained, worked his way with pick, shovel, ax, and hoe, in any and every way, just as Lincoln toiled through the long days and studied into the small hours of the morning to prepare for the destiny awaiting him.

A mother came requesting that her daughter be given the opportunity to work her way through. On the dean's desk was a long list of boys and girls who were pleading for the same chance. But the scholarship fund, far too small to cover these multiplied calls, had been exhausted, and the dean was compelled to say, "What you really need is at least \$25 with which to start your girl."

That was more money than this mountain mother had ever seen at one time, but something must be done. There was her Mary waiting in the cabin home for the news. The mother could not go back and tell the girl that her dream of an education could never come true. She hesitated at the dean's desk for a moment and then with a peculiar light playing upon her face she hastened away. In a week she returned with the money, saying as she placed it upon the table before the dean, "Now, thank God, my girl will have a chance. Here's the money. I sold my cow."

It is said that the shortest sermon on record was preached from the text, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." The preacher waited for a moment after announcing the text and then crowding his discourse into an epigram, exclaimed: "If you are satisfied with the security, come down with the cash." And this is my sermon to-night. If you are satisfied with the security which education affords; the preservation of national ideals, the maintenance of constitutional authority, the upholding of the American flag, the advancement of civilization; if you are satisfied with the security—commensurate with the spread of intelligence, the growth of virtue, and the quickening of patriotism, the very qualities essential to the preservation of popular government; if you are satisfied with the security which is still guaranteed by the principles enunciated and advanced by Abraham Lincoln, in whose name we have christened Lincoln Memorial University, then help us in the great recuperative and redemptive task of uplifting the boys and girls of the mountains of the Southland.

Such an investment will yield a perpetual dividend; it will keep the soul of Lincoln alive among the people, to whom he always referred as "My people."

34883—1668